

What Are Your Dreams For Our Church?



Masks obscure the smiling faces of (L-R, back row to front row): Marsha & Dee Melton, standing Pastor Jay, Darrell, Phil & Kay Szenasi, Christine Findley, Wanda Chenault, Jean Stinson, and Carol Baker. Julie Drainer, Lori & Levi Smith also joined the in-person discussion session with Pastor Jay on July 22 in the chapel. Future sessions will be conducted via Zoom or in-person.

Four questions prompted much discussion during the small group meeting on July 22.

Pastor Jay asked these questions:

1. *What do I need to know?*
2. *How can we reach new people?*
3. *What are your dreams for our church?*
4. *What are you afraid I will do?*

The majority of this particular group of members represented the Traditional Worship Service, with three people attending the Fellowship Worship Service. Everyone wanted Pastor Jay to know that they considered our church their home. Music and outreach has always been our strengths.

Means of reaching new people ranged from providing broadband hotspots to students to teaching members how to better use technology. Also, keeping in contact with all church family members was a big concern.

A sense of disconnect from the church was expressed due to lack of communication. Young families to older members all want to feel connected to the church, especially in these troubling times.

Pastor Jay stated that he hears many comments

about re-creating the sense of vitality that is a legacy of our church. He sees that our church has many assets to use so that our church will grow in faith and in numbers.

Jay also says there are many new green branches that are growing from the sturdy and long established trunk of First United Methodist Church, that includes a growing Wednesday evening youth and children's program. Covid-19 may have set us back, but it looks like we have something to build on.

Finally, Jay says that while he knows we have challenges, "We cannot let our challenges derail our dreams. This is a great church, with a great future for anyone willing to do the work to chase the dreams that Jesus gives us as the body of Christ."

The in-person small group sessions continue until August 5.

Meetings can be held in-person or via Zoom. If you have not participated in a meeting, please contact Sylvia at 337-1527 to schedule a date.

Finance Committee and Pastor Jay's Letter to FUMC

Below is a copy of the letter recently mailed to all church members. At the beginning of the COVID-19 shutdown, our church applied for and received Paycheck Protection Program funding which covered staff payroll for the months of April through June. Without weekly in-person worship services, contributions have fallen by 25-30%. On-line giving, electronic bank transfers, and mail-in checks sustain much of the church overhead, but are not currently adequate to meet all financial obligations. Because of that, this letter has been written.

Dear Friends,

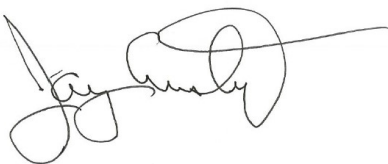
Fellow travelers in Christ Jesus, I have begun the small group listening sessions with our congregation. I have been hearing about Samaritans by Grace, a group that prepares lunches for the hungry on Sundays, the Children's Clothes Closet, Celebrate Recovery, and your sharing space with the refugee ministry. I have also heard heart breaking stories of the devastation that both COVID-19 and the oil downturn has had on people in our community, particularly the young families that have never had to weather a severe downturn in the economy. There is no doubt that First United Methodist Church has ministry to do in Odessa.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the oil downturn have not left the church untouched. We are currently looking at a significant deficit in the funds needed to meet our obligations, and the possibility of having to take dramatic action if we cannot find a way to close the deficit. If our course does not alter, we will have somewhere around a \$200,000 deficit at the end of the year. We must close that gap. The staff is working to spend as little as possible while continuing to do ministry.

The Finance Committee and I are asking you as members and friends of our congregation to consider in prayer how you might be able to increase your giving through the end of the year to help close the gap. We thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration. If you would like any more information on this, please feel free to contact the pastor.

We have included an envelope and a response form for your convenience. You can also make donations through our website at <https://www.fumcodessa.org>. The ministry of the church is our shared burden, and our joy. With our faith in Jesus Christ, we will overcome the challenges that the world puts in front of us and bring Good News to the streets of Odessa.

In Christ,



Jay Armstrong
Pastor



Josh Stumpner
Chair of Finance



Bible Study Opportunities

PSALM 119:105 *Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*

As we continue to *be* the church during this momentous time in our life, may we remember that Scripture is our guide. Intentional time spent reading and studying the Bible returns us into a right relationship with the Lord. The past four months have literally changed the paths of our busy days. Opening up the pages of Scripture can brighten the path we take, re-energize our hope in Christ and provide understanding to the one who walks humbly before the Lord.

As Christians, establishing a disciplined lifestyle in the Bible is one key to being healthy. If you do not know where to start, I recommend the Gospel of John, Psalms or Proverbs. The women's summer study just finished and they journeyed through the book of Philippians - the book of JOY. The focus was having a mind like Christ. God gives us the *choice*.

Our next phase of gathering safely includes Bible study. If you would like to connect with a Bible study group, below are those currently meeting. More are being planned. Please feel free to join these groups to connect for fellowship and Bible study.

8am class	Sundays 8:00am	Room 102	
Builders	Sundays 10:00am	Sanctuary	
Seekers	Sundays 2:00pm	ZOOM	*call office 337-1527
Serendipity	Sundays 2:00pm	ZOOM (women)	*call office 337-1527

New Mexico Annual Conference



**RESCHEDULED
FOR
OCTOBER 16-17, 2020**

Memorials

Samaritans by Grace

In Memory of

Lura Sivalls
William "Bill" Jackson

Given by

Nancy & Dub Riley

Children's Clothes Closet

In Memory of

Delores Hayter

Given by

Robbie & Dan Brazelton

Barbara & Rick Browning



In Memory of

Lonnie Sims
Tom Rodman
Charles Berlin
Bob Murray, Sr.
Elton Brownlee
Wylma Madden

Given by

Barbara & Rick Browning

In Memory of

Charles Tyer
Given by
Carole L. Millsap

In Memory of

Charles Tyer
Given by
Deborah & Billy
McPherson



In Memory of

Bill Jackson
Given by
Doris Mason
Sue & Buddy McDonald

In Memory of

Lonnie Sims
Given by
Deborah & Billy
McPherson



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Bring A Friend This Sunday

8:00 AM	Adult Bible Class
9:00 AM	Traditional Worship —Sanctuary
10:00 AM	Sunday School, all ages
10:16 AM	The Bridge Worship, —3901 E. Yukon
11:00 AM	Fellowship Worship —Fellowship Center

First United Methodist Church, Odessa, Texas, founded in 1890, is a community of Christians who have pledged to support this church with their presence, their service, their gifts and their prayers. We dedicate ourselves to spreading God's Word throughout our community and to providing meaningful worship experiences, fellowship, and opportunities to fulfill the teachings of Jesus Christ through a variety of ministries. As United Methodists, "our doors, our hearts and our minds are open to all those who seek God's Grace."

The *CULTIVATOR* is a monthly publication whose exclusive purpose is to help FUMC-Odessa accomplish its Mission by communicating and "cultivating the presence of Christ in the lives of this congregation."

First United Methodist Church-Odessa Mission Statement

*We exist for **LIFE**...*

*To **L**ove others, **I**nvide them to join us as we **F**ollow Christ,
who **E**mpowers us to make a difference.*

In The COVID-19 Era, Youth Learn How To Safely Fellowship And Serve



ECHO youth events have resumed **SWIM N' STUDIES!** Every Wednesday from 5-7pm, we swim, have a BBQ and a Bible study. Our current Bible study is the study of each of the Ten Commandments.

It has been great to see all the students again!

We are able to meet and swim safely since COVID-19 cannot be spread in a pool. When we are outside the pool, we socially distance and wear masks. The **SWIM N' STUDIES** is through August 12 at Becky and Caleb Eckel's house.
—Family Ministry Director, Caleb Eckel



On July 1, ECHO youth served at the **Odessa Recycling Center**. We served at the Recycling Center specifically to teach the youth the importance of making the world a cleaner place and also the importance of reusing plastics. It was fun to sort the plastics alongside the youth group and learn the different ways plastic can be repurposed into other things rather than just thrown into the landfill. After working hard in the hot sun, we enjoyed a pizza lunch!
—Family Ministry Director, Caleb Eckel